

STEYNING CHURCH, SUSSEX.



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STEYNING is one of a series of churches, situated on the Sussex coast, second to none in England for interest. The very early church of Sompting is but two miles from it, which Rickman was inclined to consider bore traces of early Saxon architecture. Broadwater, with its beautiful chancel, is but a few miles farther; while Old and New Shoreham lie close to the sea, and within a few minutes' ride, by railway, from Brighton. There can scarcely be a more interesting district for the ecclesiologist, while the lover of nature will be repaid by the beauty of the scenery around him.

Steyning lies at the foot of the elevated

downs, which, rising a little inland, inclose a valley singularly fertile and beautiful, surrounded by hills on all sides, and embracing an area of great extent, dotted with churches and villages, many of a primitive character, and which are of most ancient foundation. The beauty and fertility of this spot attracted even the Romans; and at Bignor, on the one side of this amphitheatre, some of the finest pavements in England have been discovered and are still preserved.

Steyning, in the time of the Saxons, appears to have been a place of considerable note; and here St. Eadmon and Ethelwulf, the father of Alfred the Great, was buried, and their relics religiously preserved long afterwards. King Edward the Confessor gave

lands to the Monastery of Fescamp, in Normandy, which includes this place; and William the Conqueror founded an Alien Priory of Benedictine Monks here, which, being granted to the Sion Monastery by Edward IV., continued to be part of its possessions until the dissolution. The church is dedicated to St. Andrew, and consists of the nave only of a larger cruciform structure, which must originally have been one of the noblest and most elaborately decorated in the kingdom, but of which we can only form a faint notion by the fragment which now remains.

The interior is magnificently enriched. The nave exhibits on each side four ornamented arches, each surmounted by a round-headed window, and they have been copied in the repairs of Arundel Castle. For variety of detail, and richness of effect, they equal any specimens extant of Norman work. Our smaller cut exhibits some few details of this portion of the building. Fig. 1 is a capital on the north side, shewing the details of the circular arches which it supports. The arrangement of the chevron upon the arch to the right of the spectator is peculiarly rich in its effect; the points of each series of zig-zag mouldings are arranged like a fan, with their angles forward. Fig. 2 is an ornament adopted for the edge of another arch. Fig. 3 is a double arch springing from a grotesque head, and is within the southern arches, immediately beneath the roof of the side aisles, which are very low. A pillar in the wall on this side exhibits some curious sculpture in a sunk tablet beneath the capital, but it is partly hidden by the beams and woodwork of the gallery; figures in Norman costume appear to be gathering grapes, or are engaged in the woods. At the east end of the church, where the transept is intersected, are clusters of columns and arches for supporting a central tower; a lofty Norman arch leads into the